

# Downtime Charges

A creation straight from the Wizard's Forge!

- How to handle plot downtime in your favorite TTRPG!
- Written by storytellers, for storytellers!
- Surprise your players with a well thought out, in depth system for training and character development over a longer period of time or a time skip!





# DOWNTIME CHARGES



ANY POPULAR TABLETOP ROLEPLAYING GAMES out there focus solely on the action, adventure, and resource management of every day living. But sometimes, narratively, we need more time to pass than just a few hours. That's where downtime comes in.

## WHAT IS DOWNTIME?

Downtime is generally time that is glossed over, something like "Okay, you spend the next week in this forest, camping out and hunting." or "Your characters spend the next few days gallivanting through town, hitting the local taverns and doing odd jobs for cash."

Now, could you play through all that? Sure. Could you make a few simple rolls to decide how that time is spent? Sure again.

But what if your players want a little more? What if they want to train their DEX stat or learn a new skill? Or spend that time brewing potions or scribing spell scrolls?

Well, you could use the game's built-in item creations rulings... but it's a bit bland and potentially unenjoyable. You could just have them roll to see if they successfully train their chosen stat, but again that's bland and rewards a single roll with a stat boost. That can get pretty out of hand quickly if you're not careful!

I think I might have something better in mind. That's why I formulated a mechanic that I call "downtime charges."

Downtime charges takes the bland skipping of a few weeks time, and turns it into a player-focused meta minigame with potentially huge rewards!

## SO... HOW DO DOWNTIME CHARGES WORK?

I will usually discuss with my players the amount of downtime expected, or just ask them how much time they'd like to take. A few days? Weeks? A couple of months? Great! Once we've found that number, it's time to make some rolls! Take the amount of time planned in days and roll that many D20s. No stat increases or anything, just straight rolls. Anything that lands a 15 or above rewards that player with one charge.

Now, once all the rolls are made and you know your number of charges, you can choose to apply these charges towards anything you'd like to spend that time on! For example in my personal game, we've ruled that it takes 10 charges to work towards a +1 stat boost, with limits on how often that stat can be trained. So, want to take a +1 in DEX? Use 10 charges, and spend your downtime training your Dexterity!

The charge cost should vary based on how crucial something is. Proficiency in a new skill might be 10-15 charges, Making a spell scroll might take just one charge. Give your players something to spend their

charges on, and tune it for their character's narrative focus. Our Circle of the Moon druid wanted to learn new wildshapes, and thus she spent her downtime researching creatures, attempting to shape into them and learn their behaviors, and spent the adequate amount of successful downtime charge rolls. Now she's picked up on a few monstrosities and is a terror on the battlefield!

## DC15 AND WHY THIS SYSTEM WORKS

In games that I run, I like DC15 because it represents an intellectual breakthrough, a challenge overcome while trying to learn a new thing, a new development or technique discovered that really ups your ability. For example, I remember playing baseball as a kid, it took me so long to figure out how to hit the ball with the bat! No matter how many people explained it, no matter how many days I practiced at home, I just couldn't get it right. Until one day, I was frustrated. I choked up my grip a few inches higher on the bat, and swung as hard as I could, following every other trick or lesson I had picked up over the past few weeks, and BAM. It turns out, I was using a bat that was a bit too long, and I was always hitting it incorrectly. When I shortened it to my length, I felt the full-contact of a bat on ball, and now I knew the feeling.

I like to implement the challenge of learning into my games as a way for players to feel rewarded or get excited about building up to that big upgrade or skill. And when the rolls are tough, the charges are few, the reward feels greater!

## EXAMPLE DOWNTIME CHARGE AMOUNTS

Subject	Charge Cost
Stat (STR, DEX, etc)	10
Class Feature Upgrade (Wildshapes or other specializations)	25
Skill Proficiencies (Lockpick, Stealth, etc)	15
Spell Scrolls/Spell Invention	LVLx10
Spell Studying	Spell LVL





## OPTIONAL ADDITIONS

Okay, so we've got a basic breakdown of downtime charges, how to get them, how to use them, and what they represent. Now, how can you tie the world into this?

### GROUND IT IN THE STORY

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Lets say a player plans to take a month of in-game time to learn a new skill like investigation, and they just so happen to know a very intelligent detective type in their hometown. Perhaps during their downtime, they spend time attempting to absorb the person's expertise, and getting advice as they attempt to grow. I've been known to grant a few advantages based on environmental situations. Don't go too overboard though, even mentors need days off or have other pupils to teach! This advantage or roll bonus could be granted situationally, like perhaps our aspiring investigator has access to a massive library with books on Investigation and detective work! Let your players think creatively about the assets at their disposal, and give them a few bonuses towards their learning efforts. Of course, this is optional if you like a more straightforward experience.

### CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, downtime charges are like a game within a game. They allow players to enjoy the game on a meta level, while achieving rewards they might not have otherwise considered. I feel like this method helps the game narratively, as you are able to summarize the more dull parts while still enjoying roleplay between rested days. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact us at the info below.

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### AUTHOR'S NOTE

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This write-up was brought to you by the amazing people at Wizard's Forge. We are branching into many different industries currently and looking to feel out our niche. Currently, we have hands in 3D Printing, TTRPG add-ons, a bit of woodworking, video and podcasting, and of course how we started—writing expansive and amazing stories.

You can find us on Facebook, Etsy, YouTube, DMsGuild, and more everyday by searching our name "Wizard's Forge" and we appreciate any and all support while we get things off the ground. We love talking shop, sharing ideas, and working on a cool project so don't hesitate to contact!

### CREDITS

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PDF design: Homebrewery V3.9.0, thank you for the simple and intuitive designer!

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